UNITED NATIONS

SECURITY COUNCIL
OFFICIAL RECORDS

THIRTY-NINTH YEAR

2544th MEETING: 30 MAY 1984

NEW YORK

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2544th MEETING

Held in New York on Wednesday, 30 May 1984, at 11 a.m.

President: Mr. Oleg A. TROYANOVSKY (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics).

Present: The representatives of the following States: China, Egypt, France, India, Malta, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Peru, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Upper Volta, Zimbabwe.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/2544)

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. The situation in the Middle East:
   Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (S/16573)

The meeting was called to order at 11.40 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East:
Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (S/16573)

1. The PRESIDENT [*interpretation from Russian*]: Members of the Council have before them the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force for the period 22 November 1983 to 21 May 1984 [*S/16573*]. Members of the Council also have before them a draft resolution [*S/16592*], which has been prepared in the course of the Council's consultations.

2. If I hear no objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

The draft resolution was adopted unanimously [resolution 551 (1984)].

3. The PRESIDENT [*interpretation from Russian*]: In connection with the resolution just adopted on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, I have been authorized to make the following complementary statement on behalf of the Security Council:

"As is known, the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force [*S/16573*] states, in paragraph 26: 'Despite the present quiet in the Israel-Syria sector, the situation in the Middle East as a whole continues to be potentially dangerous and is likely to remain so, unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached.' That statement of the Secretary-General reflects the view of the Security Council."

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.

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2545th MEETING

Held in New York on Wednesday, 30 May 1984, at 3.30 p.m.

President: Mr. Oleg A. TROYANOVSKY
(Union of Soviet Socialist Republics).

Present: The representatives of the following States: China, Egypt, France, India, Malta, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Peru, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Upper Volta, Zimbabwe.

Provisional agenda (S/Agenda/2545)

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. Letter dated 21 May 1984 from the representatives of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/16574)

The meeting was called to order at 4.30 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 21 May 1984 from the representatives of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/16574)

1. The PRESIDENT [*interpretation from Russian*]: In accordance with the decisions taken at previous meetings [*2541st to 2543rd meetings*], I invite the representative of Kuwait and the representative of Saudi Arabia to take places at the Council table, and I invite the representatives of Bahrain, Ecuador, the Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, Jordan, Morocco, Oman, Panama, Qatar, Senegal, Somalia, the Sudan, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen to take the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Shahin (Kuwait) and Mr. Shihabi (Saudi Arabia) took places at the Council table; Mr. Al-Khalifa (Bahrain), Mr. Albornoz (Ecuador), Mr. van Well (Federal Republic of Germany), Mr. Kuroda (Japan), Mr. Salah (Jordan), Mr. Mrani Zentar (Morocco), Mr. Ali (Oman), Mr. Kam (Panama), Mr. Al-Thani (Qatar), Mr. Sarré (Senegal), Mr. Adan (Somalia), Mr. Birido (Sudan), Mr. Al-Qasimi (United Arab Emirates) and Mr. Sallam (Yemen) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

2. The PRESIDENT [*interpretation from Russian*]: I should like to inform members of the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Djibouti, Mauritania, Tunisia and Turkey in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Farah Dirir (Djibouti), Mr. Ould Hamody (Mauritania), Mr. Bouziri (Tunisia) and Mr. Gökçe (Turkey) took the places reserved for them at the side of the Council chamber.

3. The PRESIDENT [*interpretation from Russian*]: The first speaker is the representative of Djibouti. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

4. Mr. FARAH DIRIR (Djibouti): I should like to express my appreciation to you, Mr. President, and to the other members of the Council for giving my delegation the opportunity to participate in this debate of the Council. I should also like to convey to you my warmest congratulations on your accession to the presidency of the Council for this month. I am quite confident that your vast experience in the work of the Council and your competence as a skilful diplomat will guide the deliberations of the Council to a successful conclusion. My congratulations are also extended to your predecessor, Mr. Kravets, representative of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, for the excellent and able manner in which he handled the deliberations of the Council last month.

5. The pressing nature of the recent developments in the Gulf region has once again impelled the Council to meet in emergency session in the hope of averting the imminent danger resulting from the Iranian aggression and attack inflicted on oil-tankers of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait sailing in their own territorial waters.

6. As we follow the course of this debate, we observe a dominant mood of yearning for an appropriate decision to be taken by the Council to prevent the Gulf crisis from spreading throughout the whole region and beyond.

7. Prior to the recent developments in the Gulf, the Council had with regret witnessed the unfortunate man-

ner in which two sister Islamic countries, Iraq and Iran, had been locked in bitter conflict for the past four years, during which time both countries lost vast human, economic and material resources that would have otherwise been utilized in badly needed socio-economic reconstruction.

8. In this connection, while we appreciate the persistent efforts exerted in the past by the Council, the good offices of the Secretary-General, the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries in resolving the Iraq-Iran conflict, we cannot help but express our deep concern and frustration at the failure of those efforts to achieve a peaceful settlement of this conflict.

9. Our concern and frustration are perhaps more justified when we admit to ourselves that the purpose of this very series of meetings is to resolve a crisis situation arising out of previous efforts that have been made in vain in the face of the deteriorating situation in the Iraq-Iran conflict. We regret the deterioration of that situation because, while Iraq has offered a positive initiative for negotiation and suspension of military operations, Iran has refused to accept any appropriate approach to mediation and conciliation. Moreover, Iran has now defied international law and order by intensifying its hostilities in the Gulf and violating the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the neighbouring Arab States.

10. The Djibouti delegation, haunted by this background of past failures of international efforts in the Gulf crisis and by the current intensification of Iranian hostilities against the Gulf States, is more than ever anxious to witness the success of the current debate at taking the right course to avert the crisis. It is for that reason that my delegation urges the Council to consider with more intent the legitimacy and gravity of the complaint of the Gulf States with regard to the aggression of the Iranian war machine against oil-tankers and other commercial vessels sailing to and from the Arab Gulf countries that are not and have never been in a state of war with Iran.

11. This body, which is the sole guardian of international peace and security, should call upon Iran to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the Gulf States, to desist from violating the stability of the region, to avoid any act that might cause the situation in the Gulf to deteriorate further and to refrain from endangering free and safe navigation for all countries in the territorial and international waterways of the Gulf.

12. The maintenance of international peace and security is the primary responsibility of the Council, and we believe that the Council has the capacity and the resolve to satisfy and fulfil this difficult task, especially when it finds it appropriate to do so. We also believe that this is the right time for the Council to take a decision on the fulfilment of this difficult task because at stake are the vital security, stability and interests of a region that is so important to developing and developed nations alike, not only for its economic, commercial and material resources but also for its religious, cultural and spiritual heritage and wealth so dear to the one billion Muslims of the Islamic population scattered throughout the world.

13. For all these reasons it is incumbent upon the Council to halt any further deterioration of the Gulf situation and to put an end to the Iranian aggression against the peaceful Arab States before it gets out of hand.

14. We are deeply disturbed about the evolution of the Gulf crisis into a new phase emerging out of the Iranian misconception that the Iraq-Iran conflict should also include other Arab nations in the Gulf because they share blood and political relations with Iraq, the other combatant in the conflict. We find this misconception a very dangerous element that adds to the grave risk of spreading the Iraq-Iran conflict throughout the entire Gulf region and of leading to serious consequences that may internationalize the conflict.

15. No logic can justify the Iranian misconception that it has the right to attack the Arab States of the Gulf and destroy their properties because of the blood and political ties they have with Iraq. If such an idea were entertained it might set a dangerous precedent for any would-be aggressor on the basis of which to attack and violate the rights of a neighbour when that neighbour happened to have historical ties and good-neighbourly relations with one of the parties to a conflict. If an end is not put to this new Iranian practice soon, the world will not be a safe place to live in.

16. The Arab States in the Gulf region have acted responsibly in refraining from becoming parties to the Iraq-Iran conflict and have, very commendably, restrained themselves to the point of frustration when Iran has arrogated to itself the right to violate their sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence by attacking Saudi and Kuwaiti oil-tankers inside their own territorial waters and out of the zone of conflict. These attacks also have posed serious threats to the freedom and safety of civilian ships navigating in international waterways to and from the Gulf States and have jeopardized the interests of other developing and developed nations. No one can justify these attacks except the aggressor, whose sole aim is to undermine the vital economic interests and stability of the Gulf States.

17. The global economy as we see it today under the principles of global interdependence has made the Gulf region an area in which the available economic and cultural resources have necessitated and cemented the inevitable convergence of the vital security and stability of the Gulf nations with the economic interests of both developing and developed nations of the world.

18. For this reason alone, all peace-loving nations, and especially the members of the Council, should strive to take appropriate action to dissuade Iran from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of the Gulf States or from any belligerent behaviour inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and to restore the stability and normality of navigation in the Gulf region.

19. In conclusion, may we all in the community of the United Nations call upon Iran to observe the spirit of understanding, tolerance, peaceful coexistence and good-neighbourliness in its international relations, to refrain from the threat or use of force against its Arab neighbours and to respect their sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence, in accordance with the principle of non-intervention and non-interference in the affairs of other States.

20. Mr. SORZANO (United States of America): We have previously congratulated you on the assumption of the presidency of the Council, but as you come to the end of your term of office, I also wish to express our appreciation of your efforts during this extremely busy month.

21. The Council has long been seized of the tragic war between Iran and Iraq. This war has dragged on for much too long—almost four years. It has already inflicted perhaps as many as half a million casualties among combatants, innocent civilians, and children and brought about untold damage to property. Emotions have understandably run very high on both sides.

22. The Council has met repeatedly in an effort to stop or suspend or ameliorate this conflict. Since 28 September 1980, the Council has adopted four resolutions calling for a cease-fire. It has sought the good offices of the Secretary-General and his representatives in working towards conciliation of the parties, endorsed the efforts of the Prime Minister of Sweden and issued five Council presidential statements, including most recently condemnation of the illegal and unacceptable use of chemical weapons in this tragic war [*2524th meeting*]. The United States whole-heartedly supported and continues to support all these efforts.

23. Despite all these efforts, the war continues, adding to its already terrible costs. And, as so often happens when things do not get better, they do not stay the same either; rather, they get worse. The war not only continues but expands, posing an increasing threat to the stability of the region and even to the global economic system. The acceleration of attacks against shipping in the Gulf, particularly attacks against shipping going into or out of the ports of non-belligerent States, not only threatens those States but indirectly poses a potential threat to world price levels and a threat of inflation just at the moment when world economic recovery and a healthy economic expansion is beginning to get under way.

24. The Council's specific concern today is the request of the six members of the Gulf Co-operation Council to consider attacks against non-belligerent merchant vessels in the international waters of the Gulf and in the territorial waters of non-belligerent States. It is completely appropriate that we should address this problem directly.

25. It is well known that the right of free passage of innocent shipping in international waters has long been enshrined in international law as a fundamental right, representing common interests of all States. Roman lawyers characterized the sea as *res communis*—by which they meant that it is beyond appropriation. Their characterization has influenced the concept of freedom of the seas as we know it today. It is too important a right, too important a concept to an increasingly interdependent world, for us to permit it to be trampled upon.

26. We recognize that many of the issues which have been raised concerning this ongoing war are complicated. We wish they all could be resolved. We earnestly desire an overall settlement. We welcomed the fact that one of the parties to the war accepted in principle the cease-fire called for in resolution 540 (1983), and we hope that the time will soon come when both parties can agree to a cease-fire and mediation leading to a resolution of their differences.

27. We believe, however, that this is no reason not to address in a straightforward manner the issue of attacks on shipping, as requested by the representatives of the six States which asked for this meeting, just as the Council separately addressed the frightful issue of chemical-weapons use. We therefore agree with the States members of the Gulf Co-operation Council that the Security Council should take a clear and unambiguous stand against the extremely dangerous expansion of the war by attacks on innocent vessels in international waters or in the territorial waters of non-combatants. We firmly support the views expressed by the Gulf Co-operation Council and the League of Arab States on this issue.

28. The Gulf Co-operation Council's reaffirmation of the principle of collective security and its expressed determination to respond to threats to the security of member States reflect deep concern about recent developments. The United States shares that concern. As President Reagan said recently, the Gulf States are anxious—as we all should be—that the war should not be enlarged. We must prevent a widening of the war in the Persian Gulf, which might disrupt the vital flow of oil. For that reason, we urge that the Council take meaningful action in addressing this critically important matter.

29. The PRESIDENT [*interpretation from Russian*]: The next speaker is the representative of Mauritania. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

30. Mr. OULD HAMODY (Mauritania) [*interpretation from French*]: First, Mr. President, on behalf of the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, I wish to extend to you our best wishes for a successful outcome to your guidance of the business of the Council this month. Your experience and your sense of responsibility guarantee such success and in particular ensure a thorough examination of the very serious problems brought before the Council by the six States members of the Gulf Co-operation Council. I am happy to recall not only that the Soviet Union, which you represent, is geographically the neighbour of the Muslim Near East, including among its citizens tens of millions of Muslims, but that your great nation has frequently been an important and decisive ally during the last 30 years, particularly with regard to the recovery of the rights of the Palestinian and other peoples of the region.

31. We wish to express to your predecessor, Mr. Kravets, representative of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, our appreciation of the way he guided the work of the Council in April.

32. My delegation also wishes to express its gratitude to all the members of the Council for permitting us to take part in this important debate.

33. Having inherited, like Iraq and Iran, among others, the noble Islamic civilization, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania has always been deeply concerned by the fratricidal conflict in the Gulf, and our people never ceases to deplore the pointless violence taking place there. In our eyes, no contradiction and no lack of understanding can justify the tragic, cruel confrontation between brothers. This abnormal situation threatens their common destiny, disregards their long history of peaceful coexistence and is contrary to the duty of tolerance, brotherhood and solidarity imposed upon them by the very ethics of Islam. Since September 1980, the world—sometimes powerless, sometimes indifferent—has witnessed in the Gulf a real tragedy whose human, economic, social and political dimensions are even more terrible than the horrors revealed in the press.

34. We cannot remain indifferent. Our people feel bitterness and sadness in the face of the grievous spectacle of hundreds of thousands of victims, Iraqi and Iranian, the irreparable destruction of so many towns and of essential infrastructure. Our people deeply regret, for Iraq and for Iran, the waste of enormous human and material potential in a war which cannot end with a victor but only with two vanquished, whatever territorial or political gains one or other of the two countries concerned may hope for.

35. In the United Nations, in the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and in the Organization of the Islamic Conference, our country has always urged Iraq and Iran to observe moderation and restraint. It has always reminded them of the need to rely on the peaceful solution of their differences in accordance with the appeals of the international community and of course their national interests. Today, again, while the Gulf conflict is acquiring new proportions and threatening the tranquillity and prosperity of the non-belligerent countries of the region, we remind Iraq and Iran in the Council of their formidable responsibilities.

36. The Islamic Republic of Mauritania is profoundly convinced that these responsibilities exclude and prohibit the uncontrollable and unwarranted extension of the conflict to non-belligerent countries. It is not in the interest of anyone at all to increase the destruction, to ruin other economies, to inflict enormous suffering on other peoples of the region.

37. In this regard we have expressed our concern, in particular at the time of the aggression against Kuwait in 1981, at the danger of the Middle East's becoming the arena of foreign rivalries and intervention, of internal divisions and confrontations between brothers. Today, the attacks on merchant shipping in Saudi and Kuwaiti territorial waters by the Iranian Air Force make this danger even more real and more painful than ever.

38. Mauritania fully shares the concern of the peoples of the region at this new and very dangerous escalation of the war, this violation of the sovereignty of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and this attack on the freedom and safety of navigation in the territorial waterways of the Gulf. The very serious consequences of this escalation cannot but further complicate a situation which is already very difficult and explosive. Even worse, it is a setback to the prospects for the restoration of peace and the reconciliation which is indispensable and natural between all brother peoples on the Gulf coasts.

39. It is the view of our delegation that the Council must condemn the inadmissible attacks on commercial shipping and the flagrant and regrettable violation of the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the State of Kuwait. It is imperative to discourage the repetition of such acts in a region of vital strategic importance whose stability and security is of interest to all Member States of the Organization.

40. Our delegation wishes to reaffirm to the sister delegations of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia its deep sympathy and its solidarity with them. We are gratified by the confidence which those two brother countries and the other Gulf countries show in the United Nations and in the Council, with its special responsibility for international security and peace.

41. Lastly, we wish for Iraq, Iran and the entire region peace, reconciliation and prosperity on the eve of the sacred month of Ramadan, a month of constructive work, piety, conciliation, reconciliation, meditation and tolerance.

42. The PRESIDENT [*interpretation from Russian*]: The next speaker is the representative of Turkey. I invite him to take a place at the Council table and to make his statement.

43. Mr. GÖKÇE (Turkey): Mr. President, several weeks ago, in this very Chamber, we had the privilege of paying a tribute to your finesse and your exemplary qualities as a diplomat. Subsequent developments have proved once again how well placed our confidence is in your wisdom, experience and skill in guiding the work of the Council under even the most demanding circumstances.

44. Our purpose in speaking today is not only to underline the concern of the Government of Turkey at the recent turn of events in the Gulf region. We are all aware that the whole international community is deeply preoccupied with the highly volatile situation in that region, which is already the arena of a protracted and costly war between Iran and Iraq. The statements of the previous speakers in the Council and statements elsewhere amply demonstrate the existence of widespread concern.

45. We are speaking today also in the hope that we may make a contribution, however modest, to the deliberations of the Council on this delicate, complex and potentially explosive issue. The Council is faced with a valuable opportunity to address itself in a positive, constructive way to a situation which threatens not only the security of the Gulf but also the economic well-being of much of the world.

46. Both Iran and Iraq are our neighbours, and with both we enjoy fraternal relations emanating from bonds of religion and culture and the shared historical experience of many centuries. We are therefore all the more saddened by the prolongation of this tragic conflict, sustained at the cost of staggering sacrifices by both sides, sacrifices which continue to result in intolerable losses not only of material wealth but also, and more important, of precious and irreplaceable human resources.

47. Our sorrow and concern have from the outset been aggravated by our sensitivity to the ever-present risk of the expansion of the war between Iran and Iraq and the direct involvement of other parties in the hostilities. We have warned from the start that the Iran-Iraq conflict has shattered more than the relations between these two major Powers in the region. The armed confrontation between them, we stated, could also bring about dangerous entanglements in the entire Gulf region. Clearly, any further deterioration and destabilization in the Gulf would have drastic consequences for international peace and constitute a grave threat to global security.

48. The change in recent months in the modalities of the conflict tends to confirm our worst fears. The prosecution of the conflict is no longer confined to accepted and mutually respected modalities. This makes us less confident about a pacific settlement in the foreseeable future. We are of the view that the contravention of established norms of conduct in armed hostilities and disregard of the generally accepted principles only serve to increase the resolve of the other side to pursue the war and thus erode further the already meagre prospects of a peaceful solution. We oppose and condemn such acts wherever and whenever they occur.

49. Similarly, we regard the attacks in the Gulf against commercial shipping as an extremely serious development. These attacks are a flagrant violation both of the freedom of navigation in international waters, a fundamental principle of international law to which Turkey attaches the utmost importance, and of the principle of the freedom of trade. Such attacks have, unfortunately, intensified in recent times. This interference with commercial shipping could easily generate new and dangerous developments which would be in the interest of no country in the region. The escalation of the conflict or its expansion will benefit no one. The Gulf must remain outside the scope and be spared the repercussions of the Iran-Iraq war, which should, to the extent possible and until such time as it is resolved, be somehow insulated and kept from further spilling over into the Gulf. The assurance of the freedom of safe navigation for commercial shipping in that strategic waterway should be the immediate objective. There must be security for all the littoral States, and there should be no fractionation of the concept of Gulf security, if stability is to be maintained and the sanctity of non-belligerents in the region is to be preserved and respected.

50. The Government of Turkey calls on Iran and Iraq to act with a sense of responsibility and to refrain from actions that exacerbate the existing conflict. We appeal to them to exercise the utmost restraint so as not to entangle in their hostilities the non-belligerent countries in the Gulf region. For their part, the non-belligerent Gulf States should also continue to exercise maximum caution.

51. The international community also bears great responsibility. We must all meticulously avoid undue interference in the Gulf. Outside intervention, irrespective of how it might be justified, could, given the stated and well-known positions of the parties to the Iran-Iraq conflict, be the precursor of more generalized external involvement, the consequences of which could be neither entirely foreseen nor fully controlled, once set in motion. Iran and Iraq must on their own, without outside interference and through means acceptable to both of them, find an agreed settlement.

52. It is our hope that the Council will find it possible to take an even-handed approach to the matter now before it. The international community may try to help the conflicting parties to find a solution but must not attempt to impose one. It is for the Council to determine how best it can contribute to safeguarding the right to safe navigation in the Gulf and to the reduction of the risk of a widening conflict. The Council, whether by way of adopting a resolution or by some other means, should essentially seek to strengthen the hand of the Secretary-General, who has reaffirmed his readiness to assist in the peaceful resolution of this conflict. The

Council must resist the temptation to adopt an easy decision which would be totally unacceptable to one or the other party. The Council ought to avoid the prospect of investing its authority and credibility in a decision that would only lead to further intransigence because of its lack of balance, fairness and justice. Both Iran and Iraq should, through the action of the Council, be enabled to co-operate with the Secretary-General, while they take concrete steps towards the reduction of tension in the Gulf.

53. Turkey, for its part, as a neighbour and friend of both countries, will continue to exert all possible efforts to contribute to bringing about a peaceful settlement of the war between Iran and Iraq and to promote the stability and security of the Gulf region as a whole. The position of positive neutrality and impartiality which the Government of Turkey has maintained with thorough consistency from the very beginning is, we believe, the only way for us to maintain the capacity required to assist in the eventual peaceful settlement of this conflict. Under appropriate conditions, Turkey remains prepared to help and will help if and when requested to do so.

54. The PRESIDENT [*interpretation from Russian*]: The next speaker is the representative of Tunisia, whom I invite to take a place at the Council table and to make a statement.

55. Mr. BOUZIRI (Tunisia) [*interpretation from French*]: As I am addressing the Council for the first time, Sir, may I say on behalf of my delegation how pleased I am to see you guiding the Council's work during this month of May, which is marked by an increase in international tension. Your outstanding qualities as a diplomat, your profound knowledge of international affairs and your wisdom undoubtedly contribute to the successful progress of the Council's work. All this is a reflection of your country, where I had the honour and the pleasure to represent Tunisia for more than five years.

56. I should also like to take this opportunity to congratulate your predecessor, Mr. Kravets, representative of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, on the efficient way in which he guided the Council's work last month.

57. Finally, I should like to thank the members of the Council for allowing me to take part in its work.

58. Tunisia feels that it should take part in the debate in the Council in order to express its great concern about the worsening of the situation in the Gulf region. Extremely tragic from its very outset, the conflict between Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran has, unfortunately, known no respite for more than 44 months, despite the efforts of the Council, the good offices of missions of various kinds and the repeated solemn appeals to both belligerents.

59. We deeply regret that the deadly and absurd state of war continues, particularly as it now seems to be spilling over the belligerents' borders, threatening other States of the region and affecting the interests of many other countries far from the zone of conflict.

60. The facts exist; they were stated during the first day of the debate. They confirm the escalation that we had all feared, which could plunge the Gulf region into a war with unforeseeable consequences for the whole world.

61. The attacks that are the subject of the request made to the Council alarm us for more than one reason. First, they were directed against the interests of two countries that are not parties to the Iraq-Iran conflict and that have constantly declared their neutrality. Secondly, they took place far from the theatre of hostilities, in the territorial waters of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait or on the high seas. Thirdly, their targets were unarmed merchant vessels, carrying neither arms nor ammunition but only cargoes of oil.

62. All attacks on third parties are reprehensible under international law. They run counter to the obligations assumed by their perpetrators under the Charter of the United Nations and the 1958 Convention on the High Seas.[1] They are also a violation of the sovereignty of the countries concerned and of the fundamental principles of good-neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence. They are a serious threat to freedom of navigation and trade in the Gulf.

63. Like the other members of the international community, my country is fully aware of the serious implications of this escalation. If the crisis is not contained in time, there is a risk that it will lead to a blockade of the ports of the Gulf countries, which will reduce the heavy maritime traffic in that region to a mere trickle. The risks run by the shipowners and insurance companies will undoubtedly adversely affect the price of petroleum, with effects on the energy-importing countries, above all those of the third world, which will suffer the most.

64. It is worth recalling that, at a time when many countries throughout the world confront serious economic problems, such a crisis would contribute to the paralysis of a number of already tottering economies and put others in difficulty.

65. The economic stakes in the Gulf are so great that the region has constantly been coveted by foreign Powers. The destabilization of the region through the expansion of the Iraq-Iran conflict would endanger not only the legitimate interests of the States and peoples of the region but also international peace and security, and would encourage foreign military intervention.

66. The escalation which we are witnessing in the Gulf risks internationalizing the conflict if this principal organ of the United Nations does not show firmness,

imagination and good judgement. The Organization has borne a responsibility since the outbreak of hostilities almost four years ago. It still bears that responsibility today, faced with new developments which should be defused as soon as possible.

67. If the Council has a duty to denounce attacks on third parties, particularly outside the war zone, it should also once again look into the origin of the crisis through which we are now living. Although they are extremely serious, the attacks on the oil-tankers of third countries are only a development of the conflict that continues to rage between Iraq and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Stopping the conflict from spreading is in itself a positive action that we all earnestly call for. It is the Council's bounden duty to work for a solution to the conflict involving dignity and honour for both belligerents.

68. Tunisia believes that the recent events should move the international community to redouble its efforts to achieve that end. The worsening of the situation in the Gulf should not restrict the Council to an awkward wait-and-see attitude or confine its action to an unworkable decision. On the contrary, it should permit it to develop an adequate response which will help pave the way to a swift resolution of the conflict.

69. We have noted in recent years that there are some who do not want this war to end. Therefore, by a subtle game of balancing forces, they have tried to prolong this fratricidal war in order to wear down the two belligerents, impoverish their peoples and thus promote their unworthy ends. We believe that, whatever happens, these manoeuvres will redound upon them, particularly if the conflict spreads significantly.

70. Use should be made of the means authorized by the Charter and international law to put an end to this deadly war and to avoid a spread of the conflict, leading to foreign intervention, with unforeseeable consequences. We congratulate the countries which in the course of this debate have expressed their opposition to any foreign military intervention in the region. At the same time, we appeal particularly to one of the parties to exercise restraint *vis-à-vis* its Gulf neighbours and show more co-operation with the Security Council.

71. While we appreciate what the Council is doing concerning this conflict, the efforts made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the various initiatives of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, we have, regrettably, to say that these approaches have remained fruitless, despite the determination and selflessness with which they have been pursued. Nevertheless, my country desires the continuation of all efforts that may one day lead to a cessation of the hostilities. We do so with the same devotion as the international community, and in its higher interests.

72. The absence of a positive reaction from either of the belligerents to the Council resolutions and the good-offices missions should not dishearten us, despite the uneasiness we feel. We express our hope that eventually these two fraternal countries will silence their guns and settle their differences at the negotiating table, thanks to decisive action by the Council.

73. Mr. KHALIL (Egypt) [*interpretation from Arabic*]: The Security Council is meeting in response to the complaint of the Gulf Co-operation Council in the light of the Iranian attack on vessels sailing to and from ports of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

74. We have been following very closely the statements made by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs and the representatives of the Gulf States, who have demonstrated unequivocally the clear-cut danger which recent grave events in the Gulf pose to peace, security and stability in that region of such vital importance to the world economy and to international peace and security.

75. It was only natural, in the light of the present situation, for the Gulf States to take the necessary steps, particularly the decision to convene the ministerial Council of the Gulf Co-operation Council, which, at its extraordinary meeting of 17 May, adopted a declaration reviewing recent events—namely, the Iranian attacks on vessels sailing to and from its member States—and noting the inherent danger to the vital interests of those States.

76. Egypt is very anxious to reaffirm that it shares the profound alarm of the international community at the dangerous escalation of events, which prejudices the freedom of navigation of ships sailing to and from ports and port facilities of littoral States of the Gulf not parties to the conflict. That is why we reject and denounce the recent attacks on vessels sailing to and from Kuwaiti and Saudi ports.

77. We are gratified by the decision of the Ministers and of all those who have come to New York to participate in this Council debate. We view that as an indication of the danger inherent in this escalation, and we must pursue our efforts here at the United Nations and elsewhere to eliminate its causes. It is worth recalling that every State should respect its obligations under the Charter and pledge to refrain in its international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of any other State. States should also pledge to respect the rules of good-neighbourliness.

78. From the outset Egypt has been following with alarm the ongoing Iran-Iraq conflict. We are most concerned by the danger of a prolongation of this military confrontation because it might well spill over those countries' frontiers, becoming not just a bilateral conflict but a much more dangerous regional one. Egypt, for its part, will spare no effort to participate in attempts to provide an atmosphere in which reason can prevail and a positive response can be achieved to the sincere call to settle the conflict through negotiation.

79. We cannot fail to recall that Iraq has responded positively to the initiatives that have been made here at the United Nations and elsewhere to put an end to the conflict and to ensure the observance of international legality through peaceful means.

80. It is no secret that Egypt has made a sincere contribution in the framework of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and through neutrality, to mobilize efforts to bring the Iran-Iraq war to a halt and to settle the conflict by peaceful means. This is being done in pursuance of the intensive contacts made by President Hosni Mubarak with a view to achieving the desired objective at the Seventh Conference of Heads of State or Government of Non-Aligned Countries, held at New Delhi in March 1983.

81. We all undoubtedly remember that the President of Egypt, in a statement before the General Assembly on 28 September 1983, called on the international community to make additional efforts to put an end to the Iran-Iraq conflict, because that war was completely aimless and meaningless and its prolongation would simply serve to increase tension, destabilize the Gulf—a region of vital strategic interests—and provide a pretext for foreign intervention. In the same statement, the President said:

> "We are not asked to take sides, but we should adopt a clear and unequivocal stand: the war must be stopped and peace must be established."[2]

82. In keeping with its efforts through its position of neutrality to put an end to this war, Egypt appeals for an end to hostilities, withdrawal and embarking on negotiations to restore the rights of both sides on the basis of respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, of international law and of non-alignment—above all, the right of every State to independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as to non-interference in its internal affairs. That explains our deep alarm and concern at the turn of events in the Gulf—the attacks on vessels of two fraternal Arab countries, both of which have made every effort to put an end to the war. Moreover, the Gulf States have made and are continuing to make laudable efforts to invigorate the international economy and to fund the ongoing development of the developing countries.

83. Because of its privileged geographical position at the crossroads of three continents for navigation and commerce, Egypt strongly believes that the freedom of navigation must be preserved in order to ensure the prosperity and well-being of all States of the world.

84. In conclusion, Egypt calls for action to help create conditions, both inside and outside the Organization, conducive not only to checking the deterioration of the situation and stemming the escalation of tension, but also to putting an end to the Iran-Iraq war. By taking action on the complaint before it, the Council will move in a positive direction to re-establish confidence in negotiations as a way to achieve peace and stability.

The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.

NOTES

[1] See United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 450, No. 6465.

[2] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-eighth Session, Plenary Meetings*, 10th meeting, para. 32.

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